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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0058

USIA FOR IEU (MR. SADLIK)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CSCE SPON CZ

SUBJECT: CZECHOSLOVAK PROPOSALS FOR EXCHANGE OF JOURNALIST
DELEGATIONS

REFS: 75 PRAGUE 3036 (NOTAL), 75 PRAGUE 3063 (NOTAL),
75 STATE 299609 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: IN RESPONSE TO OUR INQUIRES CONCERNING RESULTS
OF EXCHANGES OF JOURNALISTS WITH CSSR, GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN
EMBREPS EXPRESSED GENERAL SATISFACTION WHILE FRENCH EMBREP
WAS DISSATISFIED WITH RECENT VISIT OF FRENCH JOURNALIST DELEGATION
WHICH, HE SAID, COULD NOT BE CHARACTERIZED AS AN EXCHANGE.
BASED ON GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN EXPERIENCE TO DATE, EMBASSY
CONTINUES TO BELIEVE WITH DEPARTMENT AND USIA THAT EXCHANGES
ARE OF VALUE. INASMUCH AS UNCONTROLLED VISITS BY INDIVIDUAL
JOURNALISTS TO CSSR REMAIN AT A MINIMUM IT IS DIFFICULT TO
CONCLUDE AT THIS POINT THAT CZECHS ARE REPLACING THEM WITH
DELEGATION VISITS. NEITHER THE AUSTRIAN NOR THE FRG EMBASSY
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REPS BELIEVE THIS IS THE CZECH INTENTION. HOWEVER, CZECHS

MIGHT WELL USE DELEGATIONS AS EXCUSE TO KEEP INDIVIDUAL VISITS TO THE PRESENT MINIMUM. END SUMMARY

2. FRG EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER RUNGE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH FRG DELEGATION VISITS OF JOURNALISTS WERE HIGHLY CONTROLLED THE RESULTS WERE WORTH THE WHILE. IN 1975 FOR EXAMPLE FRG JOURNALISTS HAD "FRANK AND SHARP" DISCUSSIONS WITH HEADS OF SECTIONS IN THE MFA AND MINISTRY OF CULTURE. TOO, THERE WERE SIMILAR VISITS TO PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, THE WRITERS UNION AND TO VARIOUS NEWSPAPER OFFICES.

3. NEVERTHELESS PROBLEMS OCCURRED. CZECHS ATTEMPTED TO CONTROL COMPOSITION OF ONE FRG DELEGATION IN 1974 BY REFUSING VISAS TO TWO MEMBERS (LOW-LEVEL FRG EMBASSY PROTEST SECURED VISA FOR ONE OF THEM). MOREOVER, CZECHS WERE EASILY MIFFED AT SOME OF FRANK REPORTING IN FRG PRESS BY DELEGATION MEMBERS. FINALLY, CZECH COVERAGE OF FRG EMANATING FROM EXCHANGES WAS SCANT.

4. RUNGE SAID THAT IN TWO YEARS IN PRAGUE HE NEVER RECEIVED IMPRESSION THAT CZECHS WERE ATTEMPTING TO USE DELEGATION VISITS AS SURROGATE FOR INDEPENDENT AND UNCONTROLLED VISITS BY INDIVIDUAL JOURNALISTS. HE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF NONEXCHANGE FRG JOURNALISTS TRAVELING TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1975 AS TEN (NOT COUNTING THE PACKS OF JOURNALISTS WHICH ACCOMPANIED FRG MINISTERIAL VISITS TO PRAGUE).

5. RUNGE EMPHASIZED THAT ALL EXCHANGES WERE CARRIED OUT WITH THE CZECHOSLOVAK JOURNALISTS UNION BY PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS AND TRADE UNIONS AND THAT THE FRG GOVERNMENT HAD NO WAY OF ORGANIZING GERMAN JOURNALISTS FOR SUCH PROGRAMS. CONCERNING FINANCING, EACH SIDE PAID FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE GUESTS SAVE FOR TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES TO AND FROM THE RECEIVING COUNTRIES.

6. ACCORDING TO AUSTRIAN SECOND SECRETARY WESSELY, CZECH-AUSTRIAN EXCHANGES WERE DESIGNED TO HELP ELIMINATE PRESS WAR WHICH HAD RAGED FOR YEARS. AFTER AGREEMENT AT THE FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL, THE EXCHANGES BEGAN WITH A CZECH VISIT IN 1974 FOLLOWED BY TWO AUSTRIAN VISITS IN 1975. SIZE
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OF EACH DELEGATION RANGES FROM SEVEN TO EIGHT. CONCERNING EXPENSES, EACH SIDE COVERS THOSE OF ITS GUESTS EXCLUDING TRANSPORTATION COSTS TO AND FROM THE RECEIVING COUNTRY. ON AUSTRIAN SIDE, THE FEDERAL PRESS SERVICE PAYS THE BILL.

7. WESSELY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ALTHOUGH THE AUSTRIAN DELEGATION JOURNALISTS HAD NO FREE TIME FOR INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION, THE EXCHANGES WERE STILL WORTH WHILE. AUSTRIA HAS SINCE

RECEIVED VASTLY IMPROVED TREATMENT FROM CZECH PRESS AND AUSTRIAN JOURNALISTS HAD OPPORTUNITIES TO ASK THEIR QUESTIONS IN THE CSSR. TOO, WESSELY HAD HIGH REGARD FOR GOC PRESS OFFICIALS WHO HAVE TRIED TO SET UP INTERESTING INTERVIEWS FOR THE VISITORS ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY WOULD PROBABLY GET THEM ANYWAY.

8. ACCORDING TO WESSELY, PROBLEMS WERE FEW. A SCHEDULED INTERVIEW WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK WAS ONCE CONCELED BECAUSE AN AUSTRIAN DELEGATION MEMBER WAS A 1968 EMIGRE (HE GOT HIS VISA HOWEVER). TOO, A DELEGATION OF THE AUSTRIAN JOURNALISTS UNION WENT TO BRATISLAVA IN 1975 TO SIGN AN EXCHANGE AGREEMENT WITH THEIR CZECH COUNTERPARTS. HOWEVER, NOTHING CAME OF IT BECAUSE THE SIDES COULD NOT SEE EYE TO EYE ON HELSINKI QUESTIONS.

9. NEVERTHELESS, WESSELY SAID THAT HE HAD NOT NOTED ANY CZECH ATTEMPT TO CONTROL THE COMPOSITION OF THE AUSTRIAN DELEGATIONS, NOR DID HE FEEL THAT THE CZECHS WERE USING THE DELEGATION SYSTEM TO ELIMINATE VISITS BY INDIVIDUAL JOURNALISTS. THREE SUCH JOURNALISTS VISITED THE CSSR FROM AUSTRIA IN 1975.

10. FRENCH EMBASSY REP FIESCHI'S EVALUATION OF DECEMBER VISIT BY FRENCH JOURNALISTS WAS IN KEEPING WITH HIS GLOOMY PREDICTION AT BEGINNING OF VISIT (SEE REF B). HE SAID THAT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE JOURNALISTS WERE TIGHTLY CONTROLLED AND TO DATE "NOT ONE LINE" ON THE TRIP APPEARED IN FRENCH PRESS. EVEN THE HUMANITE CORRESPONDENT WAS IRRITATED AND WAS HEARD TO SAY THAT HE WOULD WRITE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.

11. FIESCHI EMPHASIZED THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD ABSOLUTELY NO INTENTION TO DO WITH THE ARRANGEMENTS. THE CZECH CONFIDENTIAL

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MFA MADE THEM ALL, TO INCLUDE PICKING UP TABS AS WELL AS SELECTING THE FRENCH PARTICIPANTS. FIESCHI SAID THAT A RETURN VISIT BY CZECH JOURNALISTS WAS PLANNED BUT MIGHT WELL BE THWARTED BY BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS ON THE FRENCH SIDE. FIESCHI SAID HE WAS RELUCTANT TO LABEL THE FRENCH VISIT AS PART OF AN EXCHANGE.

12. MEMCONS ON TALKS WITH RUNGE AND WESSELY POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT, BONN AND VIEC
U.

13. COMMENTARY
THE KINCERNING CENTRAL QUESTION OF WHETHER THE CZECHS ARE USING DELEGATION EXCHANGES AS SURROGATES FOR UNCONTROLLED VISITS BY INDIVIDUAL JOURNALISTS, THE GERMANS

AND AUSTRIANS HERE THINK NOT. ON THE OTHER HAND NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL JOURNALISTS FROM THEIR COUNTRIES IS CAREFULLY CONTROLLED BY CZECHS AND NEGLIGIBLE TO BEGIN WITH. WHILE WE CANNOT SAY FOR SURE, WE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY THAT CZECHS WOULD POINT TO EXCHANGES TO EXTENUATE A POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF INCREASED NUMBERS OF INDIVIDUAL JOURNALISTS, SHOULD THEY DESIRE TO COME HERE. CZECHS OBVIOUSLY FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH CONTROLLED VISITS AND WILL LIKELY USE THEM AS EVIDENCE OF THEIR COMPLIANCE WITH HELSINKI.

14. NEVERTHELESS, IF U.S. JOURNALISTS INSIST ON MEANINGFUL CZECH ITINERARY, AND GIVEN THE STATE OF JOURNALISTIC ART IN U.S. TODAY, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT EXCHANGES COULD PROVE SUCCESSFUL.

PERRY

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